

COLD WEATHER TIPS FOR THE CARE OF YOUR PET

Your pet feels cold too! To keep your pet safe during cold winter months, **The City of Millville** shares this information on ways that you can help your pets get through the winter safely and in good health. Just because your pet has fur that does not mean that it can tolerate long periods of cold.

Forcing your pet to stay outside in cold weather could lead to serious health problems and visits to the veterinarian. If you feel cold enough to go into the house, your pet probably is ready to go in, too. Just like people, pets who have arthritis and joint issues experience more pain in cold weather. Although every pet reacts to cold weather differently, the best advice is to pay attention to them and watch for signs of discomfort.

Here are some cold weather tips to keep your pet safe:

When the thermometer dips below 32 degrees, keep your pet indoors as much as possible. If your pet must stay outside, provide a warm shelter, raised a few inches off the ground, with the opening facing away from the wind and covered with a burlap or plastic flap. The shelter should be large enough for the animal to stand and turn around, but small enough to retain its body heat.

- If your pet is outdoors for extended periods when temperatures are below freezing (32 degrees Fahrenheit), be alert for signs of distress from the cold. Just like in people, shivering is a sign that the body temperature is dropping. If you see your pet shivering, it is probably time to bring it inside. Remember, your pet's body temperature is between 101-102 degrees and its body temperature lowers faster in cold weather.
- A very young, very old pet or a pet with a health problem is more vulnerable to cold.
- An animal with thick fur can tolerate cold longer than a small animal and one with short hair.
- Don't leave your pet in an unheated vehicle for extended periods of time.
- Make sure your pet has clean unfrozen drinking water. Do not let your pet drink from puddles where there may be deadly antifreeze or other harmful chemicals.
- A pet can pick up rock salt, ice and other melting chemicals in their foot pads. This can harm your pet. Massaging petroleum jelly into paw pads before going outside helps to protect from salt and chemical agents. Moisturizing after a good towel off helps to heal chapped paws. Wipe your pet's feet with a damp cloth when it comes inside to protect its pads from damage. If this is a problem for your pet, there are boots available in all sizes. Your dog can get used to wearing the boots indoors for short periods of time. Not all dogs take to them.
- If there are outside cats in the neighborhood, rap on the hood of your vehicle and look under it before starting your engine and driving off. Cats sometimes curl up next to or under warm engines when they are left out in the cold.
- Antifreeze has an attractive scent and taste for animals and is extremely poisonous! Be especially vigilant about the ingestion of antifreeze. The first sign of antifreeze poisoning is a pet that appears drunk. Immediately get your pet to the vet if you suspect it has ingested antifreeze as it can be fatal within four to eight hours of ingestion.

Recommended websites:

www.vetmedicine.about.com

www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2013/05/warm-weather-pet-tips-052013.html

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